There are Witches in these Woods

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There are Witches in these Woods

by TheFoolsLibrary

Summary

Will Graham is a sage of light, gifted with the last of the magic in the royal family line. When the very damaged throne is left open to him, and his even more damaged self, chaos is bound to ensue. Surely, when the wicked king of The Corrupt, Hannibal Lecter, takes interest in this distraught young practitioner, nothing drastic will come of it...Right? Wrong.

OR

Will is as traumatized as he is pretty, but now he has wings. Hannibal is as manipulative and horrible as usual, but he has antlers. And now they both have magical powers and flashy outfits. It's chill.

×UPDATES INFREQUENTLY, NOT ABANDONED×

Notes

Hello to all! Thanks for checking out this story, I just want to give a heads up that I am a rookie writer and do NOT claim to be a good one! I hope you will still be able to enjoy, I promise this story is more serious then I've implied...I'm just really bad at descriptions.

All grammatical errors are mine! This has not been beta read.

Of course, I do not own the show Hannibal, nor any of the characters.

Enjoy!

See the end of the work for more notes

The Devil you Know

Will stood quietly, listening intently for the dreaded sound of splintering twigs under heavy boots.

He slowed his breathing and wondered if the panicked race of his heart was as loud to another as it was pounding in his ears. Nothing came but silence. No birds taunted him with song, no insects buzzed by with their irritatingly familiar hum. Will was alone. Utterly, alone.

He should be relieved, nothing was pouncing upon him with greedy hands and sharp blades. But he wasn't.

His heart slowed, and he couldn't help the way his chest fell in disappointment. Will Graham is not a foolish man, but he may be described as a reckless one. He knew damn well what would happen to someone like him if he fell into the hands of The Corrupt. Any sage of pure practice would be killed with a ruthless vigor, but a being of light magic? They would really be in trouble.

The Corrupt had practically no remaining dark practitioners. The Pure only had one royal practitioner left. That practitioner being Will.

If he ever wanted to forget that fact, he'd have to tear the wings from his back. Those stupid, obnoxious feathers always being a reminder of his cursed bloodline. He felt like a flaunting peacock.

Magic users of royal families always bore a physical show of their status. It was supposed to be a representation of the *power* and *superiority* they had over the rest of their kind. The practitioners of light used to bare white wings, beautiful and perfect. Supposedly sprouting from the Pure magic flowing through their veins. The dark sages bore sharp antlers, dark like ink and blood. They were elegant, but dangerous.

It used to be of the greatest honor to present such a physical trait. But now, it was a symbol of fear. The winged are all but extinct, a fairytale. And the horned are the worst of The Corrupt. The sight of those curling, piercing things will send a shiver down the spine of anyone sensible. There is one man purely responsible for the reaction. The only remaining king of the dark royal bloodline. The cruelest of them all, King Lecter.

His famous calling card, hanging people on a banquet of antlers. Leaving them gouged and dripping with blood as their kingdoms fall before their eyes. The air doesn't leave their lungs untill the last of their people have been slaughtered.

Elegant but dangerous.

Kings and Queens of countless empires have been found decorating their castles like a gruesome centerpiece. *Like swine on a spit.* The merciless king is said to have a daughter, the only other sage baring those dark and cruel antlers.

Two of them, and one of him.

Will feels guilt churn in his gut like a persistent parasite. There wasn't supposed to be *any* of him left. He was supposed to have died with his father. Will should've been found upon antlers, his heart ripped from his chest. But he wasn't. He just had to watch as his father alone suffered the fate.

Sure, his father was in no way the saint his people thought him to be, but even he hadn't deserved that.

Will shudders with disgust as the image fills his mind once more. He had hidden, terrified and shaking, behind one of the many piles of fallen rubble. He was frozen in place. His body wouldn't move. Even as Lecter gazed into his father's pained eyes.

The expression stuck with Will, a year later, there still was something utterly chilling about it. The king had looked like he had been amused by a clever comment over dinner, not killed an entire nation of people.

Will distinctly remembered thinking that someone capable of so little remorse couldn't possibly be human.

The second thing he remembered thinking, in the midst of his horrified mind, was how wrong the stories of Lecter were. Yes, he was just as heartless as people warned. But clearly no one had survived seeing him face to face. If they had, they would've known that he wasn't a disfigured monster of fangs and horns like the tales have told.

He was beautiful.

Beautiful in a way that was far more terrifying then any horrid appearance could be. He was sharp, elegant, and controlled. He had moved like a wild cat, dangerous and taunting. Will had never seen anything that even resembled a being like that man. All of his thoughts had been abruptly halted as the king reached a hand into his father's chest cavity.

Lecter hadn't flinched.

He never even broke eye contact as a scream was torn from his father's throat. Will was finally able to tear his eyes away from the horrid scene as the sound of splitting ribs rang out in the empty corridor. Wet ripping filled his ears, even as he desperately covered them in an attempt to shut out the grotesque sound.

Even as his eyes were screwed shut, he could still imagine the sight of King Lecter holding his father's heart in his hand. He could still hear the thick drip of blood as it hit the ground. The king hadn't said a word. The silence of the room was so heavy, Will had almost wished his father was still screaming. Then, at least, Lecter would've had no chance of hearing his terrified breathing.

But in the end, he hadn't.

Will sat behind that rubble untill the sun of the next day rose above the sky. Nobody came for him. And so, he walked out of the ruined castle, eyes glued to the floor. Blood coated the marble, and he knew if he looked up he would see the empty husk of his father.

His split ribs and torn skin stained the inside of Will's mind.

He remembers vomiting up the little remnants of food he had left in his body. He still chokes down the taste of bile when he re-lives the memory.

Will was abruptly pulled from his thoughts as the long awaited sound of twig snapping filled his ears.

Just as the first thought of defense entered his mind, it was quickly soothed away. Long auburn hair and sparkling blue eyes stepped out from behind the shelter of foliage. The aura of Alana's magic swept over him with a pleasant warmth. Will smiled.

The beautiful woman stepped towards him, a gentle expression molding her soft features. "Lost in thought?" She asked, gazing at him.

Will choked out a breathy laugh. "Yeah, yeah something like that." He swallowed thickly, cringing at the audible action. Will glanced up to meet Alana's eyes, quickly feeling a prickly sense of irritation as he saw the pity in her gaze. Maybe it wasn't irritation, as much as disappointment.

Everyone looks at him with one of two expressions, pitiful or analyzing. He seemed to always be an accessory in the eyes of others, fragile and *breakable*.

Even for someone as lovely as she, Alana was still the master of using both those looks.

Will flicked his eyes down to the damp grass below, finding much more security in the sight than Alana's scrutiny. Well intended as it may be, it did nothing to quell the anger that bubbled up beneath his skin.

It was easier to be angry, than admit how tired he was of being seen as exotic goods, being seen as not responsible enough to think for himself.

Much easier still then considering that perhaps they were somewhat right in that thinking.

Will spends so much time in his disheveled mind he often lacks any care for self preservation. It's not like he's living for himself anyways.
The only reason he matters is because he's the last shot at victory these people have.

One hell of a lousy shot, but one nonetheless.

Will was dimly aware of a gentle voice speaking once more, and he yet again was forced to pull himself from his less then pleasant thoughts.

"Will, are you alright?" Alana said considerately, her concern reminded him faintly of honey. Overly sweet and *sickening*. Will grimaced to himself, everytime she asked he gave the same lie.

"I'm fine." He responded, clearing his throat and offering a weak smile. "Sorry, what were you saying again?" Will knew Alana didn't believe a word of it. But still, she smiled. That answer suited them both just fine, she didn't have to pry, and he didn't have to deal with her doing so. Her expression faltered though as she glanced down, uncharacteristically avoiding his eyes, instead of the other way around. Apparently the ground was interesting enough to the both them now. "Beverly was coming back from a patrol and.." She trailed off, her eyes glancing around skittishly.

Will sighed like his life depended on it. He already knew what Alana was going to say. "And she found traces of The Corrupt." Will finished grimly, biting his lower lip in frustration. Alana looked back up at him, her eyebrows creased with worry. "Yes. Jack's preparing to leave, he sent me out here to tell you." She answered, a grimace polluting her features.

Will glared at a point just above her shoulder, he felt like screaming.

Silence is something he is very well acquainted with, and it seemed to make a determined appearance as the truth lay heavy in the air between the two.

They had *no* where else to run to.

It was a pointless chase. They could never actually outrun The Corrupt, much less defeat them. Will was just the only one willing to admit it.

Jack Crawford is the leader of the pitiful remnants of the army they once had. He's stubborn as a bull, and in the end it becomes a fatal weakness. He'll end up killing himself before admitting that their people are hopelessly doomed.

Will sighed again, somehow even more annoyed then the first.

Alana turned to leave, her cream colored dress flowing with her. "We're going to be gone by nightfall, so pack your things quickly." She said, something straining her voice as she moved to walk away.

Alana paused though, for a moment she glanced behind her shoulder.

"And Will," she said quietly "I am truly sorry about all of this."

And with that she left.

Will knew it was supposed to be a comfort, but it just made him feel more empty.

Hazily he remembered the feeling of King Lecter's aura, sharp and deep, and *utterly overwhelming*.

Will wondered how it would've felt to be killed at the hand of such a man. Perhaps it would've been a better fate then this.

As he was walking away to join another round of this pointless cat and mouse game, he figured there were many worse ways to die than whilst drowning in the gaze of deep maroon eyes.

All the Living are Dead

Chapter Notes

Hello, thank you to everyone who supported last chapter! I really appreciate it :) Also, I forgot to mention this, but just to let everyone know that in this story Hannibal is in his 30s and Will is around 19!

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Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The first thing Will heard as he entered their makeshift it camp was the loud bark of a very annoyed Jack Crawford.

Fantastic, he thought dryly.

The setting sun had cast an orange glow across the bustle of anxious sages running about. The sight of the forest alight with the color made it stunningly beautiful. Too bad he wouldn't have time to enjoy it a moment longer.

Will sighed heavily as he quickly paced himself towards the small shelter that he had been calling his little home since they settled down in the area. Alana had told him to pack his things, his *things* being well worn sets of clothing and a small stack of precious books, mostly journals. The little arsenal of weapons he owned were always kept lovingly on his person, a blade gifted to him from his father and three small throwing knifes that he honestly couldn't use to save his life. Literally.

Most magic users stayed far away from physical weapons not made from their own power. It was seen as *weak* for anyone to rely on anything other than the magic they were supposed to have perfected.

Will always jumped to use virtually *anything* but his own power.

Maybe that made him weak, but he could nearly guarantee being perceived as weak would be better than whatever would come if he utilized his magic.

Light serving magic was historically seen as the *good* side of magic, the ***pure*** side. Hence the name. The naturally given gifts that pure sages were born with allowed for them to heal the wounded and perceive the souls of others. They had the ability to incapacitate opponents by reading their emotions and feelings, and those immensely well trained could even influence

and twist them to their will. That type of power ran strongest within the blood of the royals, but some normal sages were capable of it with rigorous practice. They only used it to cause harm if absolutely necessary.

At least that's what they told everyone.

In truth, pure magic was just as deadly as their darker counterpart's. They weren't any less able to commit acts of violence, *they just valued the public image of being the good guys.*

For centuries they've been so arrogantly wrapped up in their savior complex that Will honestly believes most of them didn't even realize it was a lie. A lot of people like Alana or Beverly really did have good intentions when using their magic, but that really didn't have anything to do with the power they were gifted.

Will knew he didn't have that mentality driving him and his magic.

After all, look where it got them, *running from The Corrupt like scared dogs with their tails between their legs.*

Will let out a humorless chuckle underneath his breath as he slung a fully packed leather satchel over his shoulder. With a small shake of his head he made his way to the rest of the departing group. It was ridiculous, all of it. It's ridiculous that the once considered most powerful of magic users were now in pathetic ruins.

It's ridiculous that Will is the one expected to put them back together again.

Night had fully cloaked itself over the wood by the time of Wills departure. The creatures of the night were alive and vocal as the group trekked in heavy silence.

Will fidgeted with the hem of his coat, the fabric already well worn from the repeated habit. An outsider might blame the action on anxiety or fear, but in reality it was boredom that picked away at the stitching. He knew that feeling *bored* about having his life on the line was entirely selfish when it was so vital to the rest of his people. Even being aware of that fact made him no more concerned about the threat looming over him.

He spent so much time imagining scenarios in which he was forced to start caring about his life, that when a magically controlled shadow tore through Beverly's shoulder he had to comprehend that it was actually happening.

He decided that it was in fact not a conjured scene from his mind when the sour tang of Corrupt power hit his senses. Nausea washed over him, beckoning him to collapse as burning pain flooded his head. Will stumbled back, his eyes stinging and suddenly dry. The abilities of The Corrupt contrasted those of their other half perfectly. Whilst The Pure can see in the emotion of the heart, The Corrupt can see the pain in the mind. They can both be twisted to harm the recipient.

Will's brain desperately grasped onto a moment of clarity, and through the sting of magic, he saw people falling to the ground with cries of pain. Whoever was assaulting them, they

weren't aiming to kill quite yet, just incapacitate. And that they did.

He saw Beverly and Alana clutching at their skulls, trying to fight the temptation to let the agony swallow them into unconsciousness. They failed.

Will silently fell to the ground with the rest of his companions, not because he was being forced to, but rather to see what they would do next. The cold grass tickled his cheek as he buried his face against the soil, breathing in the earthy scent, he closed his eyes. From the sound of footsteps, he guessed there was maybe four soldiers in the offending group. Four of them and one of him. Will was suddenly hit with the scent of blood filling his nose. Voices spoke in a language unknown to him, but a tone *all* too familiar. *Mocking and arrogant.*

Will angled his head to the point where his eyes were hardly visible when he opened them. Through the slit of his vision, he watched as The Corrupt sages inspected each of the bodies passed out on the ground, going through the group one by one. Taking their lives with a sicking disregard.

Will clenched his jaw in anger, he realized that they were looking for him.

They just didn't realize that their target was, in fact, here. It has been so long since Will has used his magic that his aura was *pathetically* plain, not surging with the unmistakable power of a royal. That combined with the cloak hiding his revealing wings, he was utterly ordinary to their eyes.

He could take them.

They were ignorant cocky fools, killing like it was nothing. Taking a life deserved more intimacy then unnecessary slaughter.

Anger prickled temptingly under his skin. ***You know you could***. A familiar voice hissed in the back of his mind. The voice that was always there, patiently waiting for Will to finally listen. The same voice that urged him to use his magic, and the reason that he never did.

He watched as the group continued with their crusade, the blood pooling in the grass as they went. Not enough of it though.

Will could practically feel bones snapping between his teeth, blood *sticky* and *raw* and *drenching* his hands. His veins burned with anticipation as the images flooded his mind.

The footsteps grew nearer and nearer to him. His heart hammered in his chest with an unwelcome desire.

Four of them, and one of him.

Will breathed in slowly.

Four arrogant pigs, and one royal.

His magic crashed into him with such a force, he couldn't hold in the soft gasp that was pushed from his lips. It filled his body like a burning hot pleasure, stinging and exciting and

like *electricity*.

The soldier nearest to him heard the noise a moment too late.

Will forcefully kicked the man's legs from beneath him, sending the him tumbling to the ground. In seconds Will leapt upon the fallen sage, his knife slipping from its place on his leg.

He drove it into the man's jugular.

His sputtering gasp landed on deaf ears. All Will could hear was the blood pumping in his veins. Without hesitation Will ripped the blade from the man's throat, the hot slick of crimson coating his face in a sudden splatter. He could taste it in his mouth, the sharp tang of iron was *intoxicating*.

He jumped to the ground, hand grasping his drenched knife. Will lurched to the side, narrowly missing a physical attack as one of the remaining three sages lunged at him. The woman spun around and grasped at his throat, locking in a strong grip. Will gasped at the sudden pressure, but still rammed his knee into the young sage's ribs. A gruesome crutch filling his ears as a reward.

The woman cried out and released him, staggering back. He took the opportunity to rip his dagger through her gut. The wound opened in a wicked grin, and Will was darkly fascinated with the gore that cascaded to the dirt below.

He turned to face the two soldiers who were gaping at his actions. Will wasn't fully aware of the smile twisting his lips.

They were afraid.

Afraid of *him*.

The same wave of magic from before assaulted him, the remaining sages having recovered from their momentary shock.Will stared at them blankly, the sensation now merely a tickle at the edges of his skull.

He had never felt more alive.

The shadows around them grew darker as the soldiers pulled magic from them, twisting them to their design. Will pounced on one of the men, taking advantage of their slight distraction. He buried his knife in the sage's chest, and with a unfamiliar but electrifying zest, he raked the embedded weapon down the man's body.

Blood and other unsavory gore blurred his vision as he pulled back, his blade finally slipping from his hand.

Will momentarily screwed his eyes shut, a reflex as he was once more bathed in the spray of his new kill. For a moment everything seemed still.

And then he became dully aware of the burning pain above his hip.

Will squinted his eyes open in confusion to see that he had been fully speared through his lower abdomen. His own blood covered his legs, dripping down between his thighs like sick arousal.

His head spun and the pain was a dull buzz beneath the layers of adrenaline and surprise. Will wasn't *finished* yet.

With a rasping breath, he tore himself from the object impaling him. His mind was racing with the knowledge of pain, and the immensely frightening feeling of pleasure.

It was a sinful concoction. But a *divine* one.

Will wasn't exactly sure when he entangled his magic into the veins of his last remaining foe, but once he did, it was enough to nearly bring him to his knees.

The sensation of diving in and feeling someone's soul was unlike any other. He faintly wondered how he had ever lived before having experienced the high of it. Maybe he hadn't really.

The last sage had gone eerily still, eyes wide and their hands clutched uselessly at their chest. Will could practically taste their life on his tongue. He savored it for a moment, breathing in the power. He held the sage's life in his hand, and it was invigorating.

He smiled, slow and content.

Then he ripped it away.

The only show of the soldier's pain was a soft, strangled gasp. Then the heavy sound of their body meeting the ground.

Will did fall to his knees then.

His vision started to pool into a daze as the blood he lost finally caught up to him. At some point during the fight, the cloak was torn from his back, his wings were sticky with gore, and they felt heavy with the weight of his actions. All he could taste was violence.

The violence that stained the clothes he wore, tainted his skin crimson, and dripped between his fingers. His body felt slick and dirty but *so utterly alive*.

Will knew if he really tried he could probably heal his wound, at least to the point of surviving, but he couldn't bring himself to. Frankly, he didn't care if he died, as long as the overwhelming ecstasy he felt followed him untill his last breath.

Will let himself fall to his side, no longer being able to smell the soil. Just the blood. And that was perfect.

As he felt the last strands of his consciousness slip away, Will's mind was engulfed in a darkness, *it was warm and silky.* He gladly allowed himself drift into the sensation of velvet and comfort and *approval*.

At the far back of his thoughts, he was faintly aware that the sensation was not a natural one.

But it was soothing and *praising*, and he wanted to drown in it.

The last thing he felt was a gentle hand running against his blood stained cheek, a touch so pleased he thought it must be that of the devil welcoming him to hell.

The boy lay like a fallen angel, baptized in blood and divine beauty. A siren tempting him with a song of innocence and veiled cruelty. How could he refuse such a decedent offering?

Chapter End Notes

Hmm, wonder who that could be? *Aggressively blinks at the obsessive gay cannibal*

The juiciness starts next chapter I promise ;)) Thanks for putting up with the plot building..

Tongues and Teeth

Chapter Notes

Hey everyone! Thanks for the support :) This was a longer chapter, so I apologize for the wait!

As always, I of course do not own the show Hannibal nor any of its characters.
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Enjoy!

Will hazily fluttered his eyes open, his vision blurred with sleep and fresh sunlight. He closed them shortly afterwards, slipping between the lull of rest and the persistence of waking. Faintly, he wondered why he had fallen asleep, and how it had supplied him with the lovely sensation of such restfulness.

Will breathed in deeply, a warm scent pleasantly teased his senses. He was bathed in oak and cozy campfire smoke. The smell was woodsy and nice, with a hint of masculine darkness.

Will wanted to curl up in it, it felt...*safe*.

A blissful sense of peace covered him as he shifted and felt the weight of soft silk press against the sensitive feathers of his wings.

Will froze.

Memories slipped back into his slowly waking mind and he shot up, eyes darting to his split abdomen.

It was expertly wrapped, blood had seeped through a few layers of the bandage. It had fully dried. Will wondered hysterically how long he had been passed out. He whipped his gaze around, attempting to make sense of his surroundings. He was alone, thank the heavens, but he also was utterly unfamiliar with the room he was in.

Curiosity threatened to overtake his panic as he observed the place. It was nicer then *anywhere* Will had ever been. The room was lavish and detailed, wealth practically dripping from the air. Even his family's old castle couldn't compare. (*Though admittedly by the time Will was born, it was far from its original state of beauty*.) The walls and floor were a mix of expensive looking dark wood and stone.

Various large widows gave the already spacious room an open and welcoming feel, regardless of the darker tones. It appeared the sun was rising, the stunning light pulled out shades of orange in the mahogany wood, giving the aesthetics of the area a warmth.

A impressive amount of unlit candles decorated the room, faintly Will imagined that during the night when they're alight, they must give a similar effect as the sun did.

Glancing out to the scenery beyond the walls, it was land as far as the eye could see. Beautiful land, healthy and flourishing.

Land entirely unknown to him.

If he needed any confirmation for his already growing theory, this was it. Whatever cruel fates gazed upon him had decided to throw yet another wicked surprise at him.

Will was in the land of The Corrupt.

Throughout the flurry of confused and panicked thoughts whipping around his head, one trumped the rest. *Why was he still alive?*

That predicament was far more worrisome than any other, because if he wasn't *dead*, that meant he had value to The Corrupt. Alive, that is. And even more than that, he wondered how they knew that he was alive to *begin* with.

Feeling motivated by his questions, Will fully sat up and swung his legs over the side of the large bed. He quickly regretted the speed of the movement as stinging pain assaulted his gut.

Will hissed and clutched at his abdomen on reflex. *Okay, so not doing that yet*. He thought, irritation bubbling hot in his chest.

Will forced himself to calm, taking a deep breath. He flinched slightly as even the small action caused an unpleasant shock rippling through his body. Will opted to give himself a minute before attempting to stand again, and in that time he realized how *sore* his body was.

Everything ached, his muscles protesting the extreme use, then confused by the total absence of movement.

It wasn't an entirely *unpleasant* feeling though.

Once more, he wondered, (*a tad less hysterically*) how long he had been unconscious.

It had been at least a day, the deep feeling of restfulness hinted at longer, but he couldn't be sure. After all, Will was certain he had been knocked out using magic. Not once in his life had he been as securely in sleep as he had been a mere ten minutes ago.

Reflecting on it back, even as blurry and disorganized as the memories were, he confidently knew he had sensed overwhelming power in the moments before he was out. A shiver of dread slid down his spine.

The same question persistently picking at his brain, '*why?*'

Why?

Will rolled his shoulders back, grimacing at the clicking of his joints. It felt unnervingly nice to stretch his wings out. He almost always kept them strictly covered, not just for the goal of safety. He never liked them, even before his father died.

There was nothing Will disliked more then unnecessary attention, and having wings was a god-damn free ticket to *unnecessary attention*.

Even if people knew they were there, if he covered them, they wouldn't *stare*.

His father never liked them either. More accurately he didn't like them on *Will*.

He always said that he didn't deserve them because he didn't even use magic. Sages like him were supposed to not only *use* their magic but *excell* when doing so.

He did neither of those things.

Will's attention was sharply ripped away as the door to the room slowly creaked open.

He felt his entire body tense up with anxious anticipation, so when a girl hardly younger than *him* walked in with a soft face and sparkling eyes, his brows creased ever so slightly with puzzlement. She held a beautiful heir of youthfulness, Will reckoned she couldn't be any older than sixteen.

The girl's features had a surprising resemblance to his own, dark hair and bright blue eyes. She smiled at him, a genuine excitement conveyed in the expression.

"I was hoping you would be up! How are you feeling? I hope you're not too disorientated, Hannibal said he would be careful but I know it's kinda weird being under his spells." The girl spoke, her voice friendly but Will could sense wit tickling the edge of her words.

He cleared his throat, *nervous habit*, and considered the million different ways to respond. He decided on reserved, but not too bitter. At least, as '*not bitter*' as he could be.

"I'm fine, at least I think..?" Will answered, his voice unexpectedly gravelly from lack of use. He watched as the girl glanced behind her and quietly closed the door, but made no move to get any closer to him.

She looked over him as if to check he was in fact "*fine*" as he had said. Will noticed her eyes catch on his bandaged abdomen before making their way back to his own gaze.

"That's good, I- uh, I did my best keeping an eye on your wound, it's a nasty thing. No offence." She added with another grin. Will allowed himself to give a tiny smile back, still very suspicious of her intentions.

"So you did this?" He said, loosely raising his hand to gesture at his wrapped up injury. The girl raised her eyebrows in surprise for a moment. "Oh no, I've just made sure it wasn't infected or anything. My father stitched it up, I'm not nearly as good with that type of thing as he is. I'm still shocked he kept you from bleeding out just getting here."

Before Will could open his mouth to ask, the girl answered, "My name is Abigail. I would ask you you what yours is, but I may or may not already know." She said playfully, a light giggle on her lips. "Can I call you Will? Or is that weird?" The girl, *Abigail*, asked rather rhetorically.

Will shifted slightly, undecided on whether he should trust her more or less for the blatant admittance of knowledge. He stuck with undecided.

"Well, thank you I suppose. May I ask..uh," He cleared his throat again. "why?" Will cringed at the unease in his voice.

A look of amusement crossed over Abigail's face, and she raised an eyebrow. "Why I helped you? Or why you're not dead in the middle of the woods after slaughtering four of our soldiers?" Her tone didn't change, but Will still tensed in surprise.

He swallowed thickly, trying to sense any anger in her voice. He couldn't find any. With a dry exhale of breath that could be considered a laugh, he simply responded, "Both?"

Abigail grinned. "I helped you because Hannibal wanted me to, and Hannibal wanted to because what you did out there was totally *awesome*."

Will blinked dumbfounded.

"Uh, you don't care that I..?" He trailed off, eyebrows raised in disbelief, still digesting what the hell that could mean.

Abigail laughed, a warm and assured sound, under different circumstances it would've brought a grin to Will's face. After her cheer subsided, Abigail waved her hand dismissively. "No, of course not! They were worthless, stupid little things. The pawns of a very ignorant general who acted without our command."

Throughout the apparently endless stream of questions in his mind, something in those words caught him.

'*Our command*.'

Another fresh wave of dread crashed over Will with icy persistence.

It must have shown on his face, for Abigail's expression faltered for a half second. He rolled the name '*Abigail Lecter*' around on his tongue. The acidic certainty of this new theory hit him with a nauseating force.

Will did his best to swallow it down, biting the inside of his cheek to keep back the insistent words rising in his throat. He flitted his eyes up to meet the girl's, more and more questions emerging from the murky depths of his confusion.

'Why doesn't she bare any royal features?'

'Why hasn't she introduced herself honestly?'

Will took in a breath, steading himself.

He fully met the girl's eyes. "Why does the king want me alive?"

This question was a clear admittance of his realization. Abigail looked at him for a moment, something glittering in her gaze. The corner of her lip twitched up, and she tilted her head slightly. "He said you were clever, I guess he was right."

She looked down and a brief, secretive smile ghosted on her lips. "I'm not quite sure why my father does anything, but I don't think *you* have much to worry about."

Will opened his mouth, searching for anyway to make sense of this *bizarre* situation.

Suddenly a small gasp slipped from his lips, nerves alight with stimulation. An overwhelming heat covered him head to toe, his heart pounding furiously in his chest. *Oh God*. Will recognizes the sensation like it was yesterday. Like he was still hiding behind a crumbled wall, shivering and terrified. *Screaming and blood and* ***death***.

Abigail gave him a mischievous glance, a knowing smirk on her face. "Don't worry, you'll get used to it."

The room's large door opened with a steady, unrelenting confidence.

Abigail simply nodded, and slipped silently from the room.

Will didn't even notice her doing so. How could he?

He was fully frozen with fear, but his heart pounded with anticipation and a odd *thrill* at the sight of the man before him.

An all too familiar face gazed back with sharp eyes and clear interest. He really did look like something unworldly. Seemingly more fit to be a cruel deity, that of which people wept to in desperation and terror. A storm bringer, perhaps a master of chaos and battle like the ancient Aries or Set.

Will had seen him from afar the first time he ever layed his eyes on the man, and still even then he could recognize the beauty of the king. But now, merely a few strides away, he was magnificent and utterly chilling to behold.

His aura was as suffocating as it was intoxicating, control and calculation oozed from every move he made.

The two of them sat in silence for a time, it could have been seconds, perhaps hours. It didn't matter, both of them found the other's gaze and neither dared to look away.

Will could never stomach eye contact, but he couldn't pull his attention from the endless maroon of the king's irises. He felt as if he could stare into the depths and never find himself bored, the silk and violence of blood and *art* were endlessly confined within Lecter's piercing gaze.

Will was fully enchanted.

His curling fascination with the cruel man danced with the knowledge of the danger lurking, and the combination was *horribly* alluring. It felt like the enrapture of a flame, he couldn't pull away, but he knew if he got any closer he would be engulfed in the burn and inevitable agony to follow.

The king reflected Will's interest, but the intent of his own was something far more menacing.

The dark look swimming in Lecter's eyes should have scared him. But the unmasked hunger seething clearly underneath the far older man's skin made his gut warm with something that wasn't caused by his injury.

Will was scanning the entirety of the king for the sake of assessment, and even if the sharp cheekbones and strong build were very easy to appreciate, it was nothing like that of which Lecter himself was doing. The king gazed over Will with a bizarre and entirely confusing mix of leisure accompanied by searing intensity.

A stormy, raging sea collected within a bottle and firmly sealed.

It felt like his nerves were on fire with the sensible terror of being seen as prey, and equally the burn of senseless arousal. Because prey was exactly what Will was in this moment, regardless of the intent behind Lecter's hunger, it was clear in the way he appraised Will with his dark eyes of promising inferno.

Heat crept up his spine.

The effect of this man, this *monster,* was dizzying.

A small, pleased smirk pulled at the king's lips. Subtle, but *oh so predatory.*

"I'm very pleased to finally meet you face to face, Will."

The words were purred, thick and dripping with threat.

Will swallowed thickly, a bone deep knowledge settling within his mind.

Dead or alive, he was never going to make it out of here.

My End, and My Beginning

Chapter Notes

Sorry this chapter was really over-due! I decided to move my upload schedule to weekly and bi-weekly in case there's a week where I can't get around to writing. Anyways, thank you so much for the support, I really appreciate it!

All grammatical errors are mine! I have not re-read this yet, so there will probably be plenty, but I assure you I will fix them as I see them!
Of course I do not own the show Hannibal, nor any of its characters.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"I'm becoming more and more convinced that me being alive was not as secretive as I thought..?" Was the first thing Will managed to say to the sphinx-like man standing before him. He cringed at the nervousness evident in his quiet question.

Amusement glittered deep within the king's caramel gaze.

Will swallowed and tried to ignore the base instinct telling him to curl in on himself in an attempt to escape the king's appraising eyes. He skittishly watched as Lecter tilted his head almost imperceptibly, and suddenly Will was very worried that he may have *already* said the wrong thing.

"Yes." The king responded simply.

Will flinched as Lecter took a very slow, and very small step towards him. "But I do assure you that knowledge was only gifted to a select few. Unfortunately, that brings us to the reason you are here, dear boy."

Will felt a shiver creep down his spine. Only just now was he fully processing the smooth accent that the man spoke with. Will faintly wondered what language the king must have grown up speaking to aquire such a tone. The way he practically *purred* the words '*dear boy*' made Will slightly dizzy.

He adamantly, (though not fully successfully) pushed aside the foreign and disconcerting sensation. Will didn't trust his voice to come out with any type of confidence, so instead he merely gave the king a hesitantly quizzical look. That earned him another pleased expression from the man, and he yet again tried to ignore the warmth in his gut at the thought that he was satisfying the cruel king.

Will felt a weight lifted from him when Lecter decided to gaze lazily out the room's window instead of at him. (For the first time since they started this interaction, he might add.) Somehow though, Will could tell that the king's attention was still entirely dedicated to him. That made him feel dizzy again.

"I do apologize for the inconvenience this has brought you Will, I had no intention of burdening you with any serious attack. A rather petulant acquaintance of mine took it upon himself to chase after you once he was informed of your current existence." The king locked his smoldering eyes back on to Will, and it felt like he could be swallowed by that endless darkness. "He has been appropriately delt with, and shall not make such a discourteous error ever again."

If Will had forgotten whom he was speaking with for even a moment, that statement was a sharp reminder. Despite Lecter's alluring voice and seemingly pleasant demeanor, he was utterly and indisputably *wicked*. That much was evident in the dark delight gracing his elegant features as he spoke the words.

Will shivered again, nearly relieved that it was caused by fear and not any other horribly *irrational* feeling.

Shifting anxiously, he attempted to swallow his nerves and muster up the strength to vocalize the riot of questions in his head. The king looked at him with a slow patience, like nothing else mattered in the moment except Will. "Respectfully, your majesty," (*God, that brought a flush to Will's face*.) "Why haven't you just.." He swallowed thickly, fidgeting with his hands. "..Killed me?"

The question was blunt, but an obvious one to ask. He was cleaned of blood, (*Also something that he tried not to think about.*) Well rested, and medically cared for, when he should logically be six feet under by now. Hell, maybe seven just for good measure.

"A quite valid question indeed, and I will do you the favor of summarizing it to the best of my ability." The king paused, an unreadable expression painted on his chiseled face. "I have absolutely no wish for your kind to be eliminated from the world, the forces of light and dark are made to be in symmetrical harmony with each other. It would defy the natural law to subtract one from the equation, now wouldn't it?"

Will couldn't help the look of bafflement twisting his young features. "That doesn't exactly line up with your previous track record, King Lecter." He sneered, fear momentarily replaced with an attitude that he immediately regretted.

Shockingly, Lecter didn't seem bothered by his disrespect. Rather, it seemed he was more pleased and amused than offended. That unnerved and relieved Will in equal measure.

"I don't desire the formality Will, please, call me Hannibal." The man said with a smooth smile, his eyes still an empty abyss.

Will swallowed.

Hannibal.

It felt weird, giving the almost deified king a personal name. Not entirely an uncomfortable idea, but a weird one.

Hannibal took an almost imperceptible step closer, eyes still glued intensely on him. "I understand the sentiment you may hold, but there's a vast difference between settling an age-old score,"

The king paused, surely noticing Will's utter aversion to meeting his eyes. Tension crackled between them, and Will felt like he couldn't breathe.

His heart leap into his throat as a gentle hand brushed lighty under his chin. The touch was just barely a tease to his skin, but it felt like a scorching brand.

Will hastily obeyed the silent order, and looked back into the darkness of Hannibal's gaze, and Hannibal, in turn, looked immensely pleased.

The king just barely tilted Will's head up with a nudge of his fingers, and he got the feeling that he was again being observed with an intent he had no understanding of.

He nervously swallowed, realizing a moment too late that the movement clearly brushed against Hannibal's hand from where he had rested it. Will saw the king's eyes track the movement of his Adams apple as it bobbed in his throat, and he could feel heat burn his face.

With a lazy indulgence, Hannibal dragged his eyes back up to Will's flushed face and a slight twitch of his lips said that he was aware of *exactly* how Will was feeling at the moment.

"And the desire to keep the kingdom's heir alive." The king finished his statement with a deep tone of contemplation and amusement.

Will couldn't stop the shiver that ran through his body as Hannibal gently dragged his index finger from Will's chin. Instead of removing his hand, the king's thumb brushed just below his bottom lip, and Will froze.

Simultaneously he wanted to learn into the touch, (because *god*, he was touch starved and Hannibal was so horribly *gentle*-) but he also wanted to pull away in fear and disgust. Because the hand that traced his face with something akin to tenderness, was the same that had brutally ripped the heart from his father's chest. And that, that *really* should have bothered him more in the moment then it actually did.

He didn't dare move as Hannibal leaned in, so much so that his warm breath tickled Will's slightly parted lips.

"Tell me Will, what fun would there be for a king with no challenge to tempt his violence?"

The man's voice slipped out huskier than it was just shortly before, his accent making his voice rougher instead of the normal smooth controlled tone. Will felt something in his gut turn warm and soft with an unwelcome desire. (Good lord what was *wrong* with him?) The feeling was only intensified by the position they were in, as Will was still seated on the bed

and Hannibal naturally had a much more daunting figure, now doubled as he loomed over Will. It would take him no effort to push Will down, and keep him there-

Then it was gone. Hannibal smoothly released Will's chin, stepping back like nothing had happened. (Like he hadn't just practically given Will a heart-attack) The smug bastard just gazed at Will with a small self- satisfied smirk, before looking out at the fully risen sun with a infuriating ease. "I would like for you to stay here, anything you may wish to have I will assure that you receive without problem. I do not desire to end your life, but I will not have you returning to your people at the moment, for it would not be beneficial to them or you."

Will's head spun with the information, and he had a million things to say, but he couldn't even bring himself to breathe. So instead, when Hannibal turned to asses his silence, he just gave a small, slightly confused nod. His brain didn't have the capacity to ask the king *why*, but he knew it wasn't a request, it was an order.

Even with his eyes glued to the floor, Will knew that Hannibal would be wearing the same small smirk of pleasure.

"Abigail will be here to help you with anything, and she'll be more than happy to assist you." The king said casually, finally turning to walk out after what seemed like a life time. Will was just about to relax, when suddenly Hannibal stopped with one elegant hand placed on the door's handle.

"Take the remainder of the day to..*collect* yourself. I will speak with you again tomorrow to get you situated in the palace, but please, rest for now." Hannibal said over his shoulder. Once more, a gentle order, but surely a dangerous one to disobey.

Will just mustered up another small nod, just barely more confident than the last.

"*Good boy.*" The king purred, thick with amusement.

With that, he finally parted from the room.

Will whimpered under his breath, and collapsed onto the bed, desperately wishing away the burning ache between his thighs.

Chapter End Notes

Will: Oh no Hannibal's so scary and dark.. he's probably going to kill me 😱

Also Hannibal: Aww look at my pretty boy with his pretty wings and pretty eyes 😍😋 I just wanna pet him

AKA: A chapter summery

Drinking with the Devil

Chapter Notes

HEYYA SO SORRY!!

So, I got covid and was out of shape for a weeks, then I just really couldn't get any motivation, and my life's been crazy, so I really apologize for the inactivity!! I am still super interested in finishing this story...and I refuse to stop writing it because I haven't even gotten to the smut yet 😋 I hope you'll forgive me!! Thank you so much for the kind support and comments, it means so much!

As always, this has not been beta read, all mistakes and grammatical errors are mine! Of course, I do not own the show Hannibal, nor any of its characters.

Enjoy! <33

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After the absolute whirlwind of the day Will had already experienced, he followed Hannibal's order to rest.

He lay back with a heavy sigh, feeling impossibly tired after just a mere conversation with the king. Will rolled onto his uninjured side, tucking his wings behind him, allowing himself to once again appreciate the smooth feeling of expensive bedding. He had to admit, there were worse places to be held captive. Captive? That's probably the closest thing Will could call whatever the hell was happening.

The image of Hannibal was irritatingly still very much lurking in his head. What a puzzling man, admittedly, fascinating. He wasn't a crazy or crude barbarian, and that made him far more terrifying.

The feeling of the man's touch still burned faintly on his skin, the phantom sensation sending the same fluttery warmth deep into his stomach. *God he had to cut that out*. He scorned himself aggressively, telling himself that the feeling was a perverted defense to the fear he felt. Perhaps that was true, or maybe he just had a really concerning way of perceiving monsters with hypnotizing accents and murderous tendencies.

Will had no idea what the king was thinking, and that thrilled him in the worst, most addictive way.

Will flipped over to lean on his other hip, and felt the intended punishment of sharp, needle like pain. He grit his teeth as it ran through him, and for a moment he felt satisfied at the distraction, but he hissed as it quickly became too much and he relented. Finding himself laying again on his back, the same as when he awoke in the room.

Will sighed loudly, draping his arm over his eyes. His limbs were progressively feeling more and more heavy, beckoning him to go lax and submit to the pull of sleep. He felt a small pang of bewilderment as the sensation creeped slowly over him, seemingly not having noticed it untill now. Will didn't linger on it, too tired to fight the doubt slipping naturally into his thoughts.

Sighing again, he turned over and found himself comforted once more when he breathed in that warm, smoky scent that lingered on the blanket. It had been so long since Will had slept in an actual bed, much less one this luxurious, and hell, he was only human.

After one more futile attempt at keeping his eyes open, he finally let them drop closed with a finality, not bothering to hate himself for falling into the best sleep he could ever remember having.

When Will awoke again, he was hit was a wave of déjà Vu. Except this time, instead of waking up to nothing but his own heartbeat, he was greeted with a soft knock.

Will felt his body tremble as the already familiar aura of King Lecter assaulted him, before the man even walked in. He wondered if Hannibal purposely allowed his aura to be so stagnant, for surely someone as powerful as him could easily hide it. Seemed like a possibility, considering the arrogant bastard-

Will's eyes snapped up as the door elegantly swooped open, of course revealing none other than the large frame of the king.

Differing as well from the first experience he had with the older sage and this room, was the fact that Hannibal carried a tray. (*perfectly balanced on his forearm, because no, he couldn't just hold it like a normal person!*)

Will found himself blinking up at Hannibal with surprise. Naturally, he just received that same, confident little lip twitch. He couldn't tell if he was growing to hate that, or worse, like it.

"What, did you think after all that I have done to attempt to convince you of my intent, you still worry I am going to let you starve?" Will just shrugged, fidgeting with his hands. His stomach took the moment to remind him that he was actually quite hungry. What was the last time he ate?

Will quickly pushed aside the thought as Hannibal moved over to place the gifted food on the table built in the room. He was momentarily mesmerized by the way the leather of the king's clothing fit around his broad body, and before he could stop himself, Will imagined what the muscle laying underneath would look like. A heat flooded his face as he forcefully threw the thought out of his mind.

The horned man gracefully fell into one of the two chairs accompanying the earlier mentioned table. (*Huh, Will didnt even notice there were two.*) With the smallest movement of his hand, Hannibal gestured for Will to join him.

Swallowing down his resign, he stood up and winced at the feeling of his sore limbs. His legs lacked strength, and his back protested the sudden change in angle, but Will was determined to try and hide the discomfort. He gave his stiff wings a little swoosh, not registering that he even did it untill a moment later.

Will, much less fluidly, sat down in the opposite seat. Wary eyes scanned the meal laid out before him, and he could feel the slight rise of his eyebrows as he observed the spread. Will had never seen such nice food in years (*if ever*) and he again felt suspicious of the presentation.

Must have some damn good cooks at the palace, unsurprising, all things considered.

Most likely noticing his puzzlement, Hannibal said, "I'm very careful about what I put in my body, therefore I often end up preparing most meals myself."

Now that caused even more of an eyebrow raise from Will. "You *made* this?" He asked, momentarily allowing himself to forget he was seated across from a merciless killer.

Hannibal gave a tilt of the head, which Will was quickly learning was the most non-verbal answer he could get from the man. *Huh*.

Will picked up one of the offered utensils, and glanced up at the king. "I'm going to go ahead and assume that you wouldn't make such a pointless move as poisoning this." He said, loosely motioning at the dish with the fork in his hand. Will found himself honestly a tad impressed at the slight humor he put into the comment, regardless if it was a smart thing to do or not.

Hannibal let out a low chuckle. Shivers ran down Will's spine.

"If I were going to kill you, I wouldn't taint the food with such methods." Hannibal responded, annoyingly charming.

Will nodded, allowing himself a quiet scoff, before lifting a small piece of meat to his lips. Immediately he was overcome by the expressive flavors. It was absolutely *phenomenal*.

Will couldn't stop the moment of startled disbelief that crossed over his features. He chewed, attempting not to scarf it down like a starved dog, before swallowing. He could feel Hannibal's intense gaze lingering on him as he did so, and he hesitantly glanced up at the man. Will had to swiftly silence the horrible butterflies that swarmed his gut as he saw a deep pleasure lingering in the king's eyes, a slightly more obvious smirk toyed at Hannibal's curved lip, and Will felt his neck burn with a noticable heat.

The man's expression faded slightly, but a mirth determinedly stayed painted on his face. Will had the natural obligation to say something, but still felt quite uncomfortable complimenting his captor, so he mustered a cautious "Thank you."

Still worried that he was being played, he tried not to enjoy the very skillfully made food. Hannibal still focused his unrelenting attention on Will, and responded with a notable satisfaction. "It's my pleasure."

Will honestly believed him on that.

He continued to eat with a barely restrained haste, and Hannibal mercifully stayed quiet for the majority of the interaction, seemingly able to draw himself away from Will after he expressed his enjoyment of his meal. There was something about the king though, that made his presence utterly impossible not to notice.

Figures, he was a surprisingly *mellow* presence. A deep, festering patience radiated from him. He was always there, but he wasn't demanding attention, his physique and aura automatically earned it after all.

Will found it wasn't unpleasant, once he got used to the feeling of the king's potent magic thickly surrounding his figure. Hannibal was so *confident*, so sure of everything, that it brought an odd stability to Will.

Will found himself irritatingly excited to spend more time in Hannibal's vicinity.

Of course, he was still fully aware of the horrors that the king was capable of, and that in reality he probably wasn't anything but a heartless *monster*, it was still stupidly easy for Will's mind to get comfortable around him.

And while he spent much time berating himself for that temptation, he also allowed himself the small comfort of realizing that Hannibal probably spent much time crafting the perfectly appealing '*person suit'* to make himself easy to trust.

Easier to lure prey if they walk into your trap willingly.

Once he was fully finished with his meal, clawing anticipation made his gut churn.

The food itself was wonderful, flavorful and very impressive, but it didnt do much to sooth his persistent nerves. Hannibal stood up, like a panther stretching contently after a pleasant nap, and glided over to the door.

Will followed suit, but don't follow the king to the door, waiting for some type of instruction. He could see Hannibal smile at that.

Will was slightly infuriated at how consistently at ease and amused the man was. *He could use that smug-ass confidence.* Will thought with an internal grimace.

"Unfortunately, due to your injury you won't be able to do much for a little while longer, but I do wish to get you comfortable in a better suited temporary room." Hannibal said, gesturing to the space they were in.

Will raised an eyebrow. "*Temporary*? You're giving mixed signals on the '*not gonna kill me*' thing." Will commented with a dry humor, deciding that he might as well see how tolerant the king is to his bluntness.

Hannibal just widened his smirk, a knowing look burning in his dark eyes. Will found himself squirming under that gaze again, unnerved at the feeling that filled him, like he didn't even begin to understand what was happening.

He felt vulnerable under the scrutiny. Will hated feeling vulnerable.

"I assure you, it has nothing to do with killing you darling."

That wasn't reassuring.

"Now, if you'll follow me." Hannibal gently added, opening the door with a patient expression.

The castle halls were as to be expected, but still breathtakingly lavish. Will tried not to let how impressed he was show on his face, but he was sure he must've failed. Dark wood and gold seemed to be the frequent color scheme for the large corridors. It gave an elegant, sharp look to the place, and held a distinctly different feel than the room he was in previously. Whereas the dark colors in that space were warm, like fire in the night, it was clear the common space between individual areas was intended to intimate, to be cruel and impersonal. It was a very effective tactic.

Will listened to the familiar sound of Hannibal's stride against the marble floor of a palace, and shivered internally at the associations that came with it. He almost found humor in the horrible irony that struck him. His father had died in his castle, at the hands of the man walking less then three feet away from him. And yet, Will wasn't afraid.

"As I said previously, I will not have you doing anything, *strenuous*, with your current bodily predicament. For the time being, all you should be concerning yourself with is not aggravating that injury, thankfully it should be a very swift recovery, so I suggest you settle your mind, at least untill your back to proper functionality."

Will swallowed, the king's words had a very clear unspoken meaning.

Don't try to escape untill your well enough to put up a fight.

Before he could think of a moderately tactful question to respond with, Hannibal came to a halt after another few turns down equally daunting halls. Will had been more focused on the man's body language than where he was actually going, and he had a sinking feeling he was probably in a especially complicated space to find in the enormous palace.

The king smoothly opened the door before them, and gestured inside. Will gave him a pointed look, and walked inside, dread tugging temptingly at his feet.

(Good gods, this place is even nicer than the last one.) Despite himself, he was a tad in awe.

Hannibal had silently joined Will, hovering just over his shoulder. The king was close enough to him that if Will wanted to, he could take half a step back, and have his spine pressing against the older man's chest. Hannibal's rather daunting figure was encouraged by the fact that he was quite tall, and compared to Will, he stood close to a whole foot taller.

He adamantly shoved down the warm butterflies that the thought caused, cursing himself up and down for the unbidden desire.

Will took multiple small steps forward, and shifted himself so him wasn't fully facing Hannibal, nor the room.

Another dark look swam in the king's maroon eyes, but he caught something that flashed for just a second over the man's features. Almost imperceptibly, there was something akin to *disappointment*. It was gone as quick as it came, and the impenetrable mask was back on.

"There should be everything you may need here, and I think it will suit you well for the time being. There's a washroom connected on the far right, there's fresh clothing and warm water awaiting you, so please, enjoy it." The king said, with a seemingly genuine smile on his curved lips.

The thin curtains in the room were closed, allowing only muffled sunlight through, the rest of the visibility was caused by the glow of many lit candles. And in the dim, flickering light, the antlers crowning Hannibal looked slick, deep red shifting within them, like dark, spilled blood.

Will had never seen something that reflected death, in it's most pure sense, as those cruel horns did.

Realizing that he hadn't answered, a beat too late, he said "Uh- thank you, I will. " Will's lips twitched into something like a smile. "W-what about the wrapping on my hip?"

He suddenly remember what Abigail said about the expertly done bandage on his abdomen, Hannibal had done it himself. Heat blossomed in his chest as he thought about those hands on his unconscious body.

"Leave it, it's coated with lanolin, and made with various water resistant plant bases. It will withhold itself perfectly well for a while under the stress of water, so do not worry yourself with it." Hannibal paused, narrowing his eyes slightly, as if momentarily considering something.

"I'll remove and reapply it once you're finished, as I would like to observe the progress your wound has made in it's recovery. I have a few matters that I would be wise to attend to, so do take your time, as I will be occupied for a fair while." The king said, with his particular tone of finality that signaled little room for discussion.

Will attempted to not seem flustered by the idea, and nodded. A small excitement filling him at the prospect of an actual bath, and the time alone.

"*Lovely*." Hannibal responded with a small nod of his own, and smoothly as ever, proceeded to slip out of the room, door closing behind him.

Will was left alone with the all encompassing sound of silence.

Relief washed over him, but a small nagging part of his brain wanted to call out for the king to *come back*, wanted the overwhelming aura of wicked magic to fill him with that anxious thrill once more. It felt strangely empty now, to be in a room without Hannibal's strong presence.

Will walked swiftly around the far larger area, not taking the time to observe any detail, for he felt like he would be partial to scrubbing himself raw with scalding water at the moment.

When Will entered the impressive washroom, he felt himself instantly relax a bit.

The sweet-musk aroma of wood and herbs filled his senses, and a light steam drifted in the air. The space was comfortably heated, and the lighting was the same gentle glow of flame and hazy sunlight. His eyes landed on the large tub filled with very enticing warm water.

At the moment, there was really nothing he could do that would productively help him out of his current situation, so he allowed himself a small smile at the luxury being offered.

With slightly hesitant hands, Will undid the ties on the thin shirt he wore, enough to slip it over his head with careful movements. The gruesome wound on his hip was still aching, but it was manageable, more so then he thought it should be for the extent of the injury. Gently, he ran a hand down the pale expanse of his torso, fingers absent mindedly tracing the light definition of muscle. He slowly prodded the bandage, testing the pain he felt in response. Will found himself a little averse to fully removing his clothing, it felt so vulnerable, in a place he scarcely even knew.

Embarrassment aside, he was quite glad that Abigail found no problem in cleaning the mess of blood and dirt from his damaged body. It had been ages since Will last had the opportunity to properly bathe, outside of rivers and lakes, which really didnt offer much in the long run. And even though he was fine with that, the offer of a hot, clean bath was a strong temptation.

Will undid the laces on the soft pants he had been put in, and let them slide into a pool of silk on the floor below. He briefly saw the reflective glint of a mirror in the far corner of the large space, and he purposefully avoided looking into it.

He swallowed the odd nervousness clawing at the back of his mind, and slipped out of his under clothes, obviously those had avoided being changed, but thankfully didn't absorb any of the *unpleasant* matter that covered the rest of his original garments. The only thing covering his otherwise completely bare body now was the bandage wrapped firmly around his lower abdomen.

Choosing to trust Hannibal's word, he let it be, and Stepped towards the tub.

The discomfort of being unusually naked was overcome by the surprising feeling of relief that came without the stimulation of fabric against his skin. Dipping once leg into the waiting

water, he felt pleasure relax his muscles, the warmth seeping through his skin.

With a quiet groan, he fully lowered himself into the spacious tub, eyes fluttering shut as his nerves sung with gratitude. Will ran a hand through his hair, leaning his head back and savoring the moment. *Well, he could stomach dying if he got this before hand*. Will thought with a morbid humor, then caught himself in a frown when he realized that he honestly believed Hannibal had no plans to kill him. Not yet, at least.

That puzzled him, albeit *everything* about the king was puzzling. Will knew that the man was dangerous, but he also knew, with an unexplained certainty, that he kept his word.

Hannibal, in a bizarre sense, was seemingly the most honorable man Will had met. He could tell that the king held his pride above all else. So he would be an honest man, because trickery implied *weakness*. Hannibal wasn't weak enough to require outright deceit.

Quiet half-truths would probably be more his style. Not lies, but manipulations. In truth, Will was used to liars and thieves and those who tried to poorly manipulate others, but he had never encountered someone who he was confident could actually get away with it. That scared him. Because even with the *knowledge* of a potential danger, he couldn't entirely predict why or *when* it would strike, and that was worse then not knowing at all.

Will steeped himself in his thoughts as he did likewise in the warmth of the hot water surrounding him. Thoroughly enjoying the sensation, he somewhat leisurely washed himself, comforted by the lax time restraint.

Of course, his brain had to plague himself with something to ruin his small moment of peace.

Though he was already physically cleaned of the gore he drew forth from the days previous, he felt as if he was trying to claw off the mental violence still lingering.

It didn't leave though, it felt like instead of *ridding* himself of the feeling, he cemented it in place in the halls of his conscious. It carved a spot in Will's skull to nestle in and grin, the feeling of sticky blood and rushing power echoing tauntingly through his mind.

Will knew it was bound to revive itself again, with it's song playing behind his eyes, such a symphony couldn't be ignored forever.

But that was tomorrow's problem. Right now he just had to figure out a way to survive the coming interaction waiting for him outside his door.

Somehow, it wasn't a much less daunting task.

Chapter End Notes

So, I'll be back to my normal upload plan now! I have almost half of chapter 6 written (It gets fuuun 🤭) so that should be out early next week! Thank you so much for your patience!!

End Notes

Constructive criticism is very welcome! Feel free to leave your thoughts down below :) thanks for reading!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!